1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

ments, ritually bores the ears of boys and girls. Formerly, the ritual boring of a boy's ears was an important initiation rite, marking his transition from boyhood to adulthood.

The clothes washed by the washerman (Maḍivāḷa) are not only clean but ritually pure (*maḍi*), and ritually pure clothes should be worn on ritual occasions. The washerman's services are necessary on every ritual occasion. For instance, at a Coorg wedding he has the duty of supplying clean cloths for the bridal pair to walk on, and cloths to cover the ceiling above the bridal seat. He has similar duties at the festival of the village-deity. He also acts as the ritual purifier when a birth or death occurs in a Coorg house. But some Coorgs, especially those in Kiggaṭnāḍ, resort to the Brahmin for ritual purification.

Contact with a barber defiles a Coorg, and every Coorg has a purificatory bath after being shaved by a barber. Such a bath is necessary in order to restore the shaved person to normal ritual status. The barber's services are, however, indispensable at a wedding and a funeral, and shaving is an essential preliminary act for men on ritual occasions.

The Mēda occupies a very low position in the caste hierarchy. He makes artefacts like baskets, fish-traps, and receptacles of cane, *võṭé* reed, and bamboo. He is indispensable at a Coorg festival, dance or hunt, where he beats his tom-tom. The Mēda is a byword for stupidity in Coorg folklore.

The strength of the bond prevailing between the Coorg master and his Poleya servant expressed itself in ritual. Formerly, one or two members of the Poleya servant-family observed ritual mourning for their dead master or mistress. On the day their mourning terminated they were given gifts of cloths and provisions by their masters. The Poleya servants (men) also performed a mourning dance (*anga kaḷi*) in front of the master's house before the corpse was removed to the burial-ground.

At a Coorg wedding, just as the bridal pair are about to leave the bride's house for the groom's, a Poleya servant of the bride's family comes forward, holding a torch in his left hand, while he spreads a cloth before them. The groom throws money, equivalent to a *paṇa* (about three annas), on the cloth. The Poleya then removes the cloth, thus enabling the bridal pair to proceed: contact with a cloth touched by a Poleya defiles a member of a high caste.

Sometimes ritual occasions stress the structural distance that

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

the sacred see-saw. Several years ago my friend Shri Paṭṭamāḍa Ponnappa of Bēngūr was asked, during the bienniel festival, not to touch the see-saw.

The entire atmosphere of Coorg folklore is martial: secret raids, fights, heroes, and intrigues are the stuff out of which a folksong is made. The bards delight when a hero is born in their *nāḍ*. They describe the event with gusto. There is a storm, the earth trembles, and the men in the hostile *nāḍ* suffer from headache. On the other hand, the bards wail with self-pity when their *nāḍ* suffers a defeat in a fight. The men of the *nāḍ* go on pilgrimage to their patron-deity and pray to him for the birth of a hero in their midst.

In a fight between two *nāḍs*, the temples belonging to either side were commonly attacked. In fact, a temple constituted the most sensitive part of a *nāḍ*. The prevention of the offer of worship to the deity of another *nāḍ* inflicted a very deep humiliation on the latter; and the stealing of the property of the temple of another *nāḍ* was as bad. In a struggle between two *nāḍs* which centred round their temples, the deity of the triumphant *nāḍ* was regarded as having triumphed over the deity of the defeated *nāḍ*. A devotee of the deity of a *nāḍ* was also a patriot of that *nāḍ*. He had to take up arms to ensure the continuance of the offer of worship at the temple of his *nāḍ* or village, and to see that raiders did not succeed in carrying away the property of the temple.

Patriotism for one's *nāḍ* was widespread and deep, and even women and children were imbued with it. Women were in an unfortunate position as they were torn between their love for their natal *nāḍ* and their duty towards their conjugal *nāḍ*. There are instances of women working for their natal *nāḍ* against their conjugal *nāḍ* when the two were at feud with each other.

The widespread prevalence of feuds did have one important structural consequence. They very effectively counteracted the tendency of caste to stress the horizontal ties at the expense of the vertical ties. But with the conquest of Coorg by the Lingāyaṭ Rājas and the decrease of feuds, the horizontal emphasis of caste increased. Thus wider political integration strengthened caste.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

instance of the silent and effective transformation of an original Coorg custom into a similar, though not identical, Sanskritic custom.

A girl ought to get married and become a mother, and a mother is honoured among Coorgs. The bond between a mother and child is the most intimate of bonds and this fact expresses itself in ritual. While other relatives, including the infant's father, become free from birth-pollution on the twelfth day, the mother becomes free from pollution only on the sixtieth day. The stronger the bond prevalent the longer is the period of pollution, and this is so in birth as well as death.

When an infant whose milk teeth have not appeared dies, it is buried without ceremony, and a half of a coconut shell containing milk from the mother's breast is kept over the grave. Only the mother is required to take a bath and change into pure clothes.

The special importance of the maternal bond is recognized at marriage also: the mother is the first person to perform *mūrta* to the bride or groom, provided she is not a widow. The mother has to give her money-gift enclosed in a purse, and this is tied to the frontal breast-knot of the bride's *sari*.

It is not only in ritual that the strength of the mother–child bond is acknowledged: a number of proverbs testify to its strength. One compares the motherless child to a crop in drought. Another tells us that the father becomes a firebrand after the mother is dead. In proverbs the mother is the tender figure and she contrasts with the father who is comparatively lacking in affection and fickle. He can be trusted only as long as the mother is alive, and once the mother dies, his affection for his children decreases. He is likely to take up another wife who will be the focus of his interest and attention.

The dependence of children on their mother later gives way to great regard and respect for her, and this fact complicates the husband–wife relationship. A man does not like his wife's criticizing his mother, and even if he discovers that his mother does not treat his wife properly he would be loath to intervene.

The bond prevalent between a mother and her daughter is always a very deep one, and has a great poignancy because the daughter, on marriage, has to leave her natal home for her conjugal home. The mother is aware that her sons have all the rights, privileges, and power in the ancestral house, whereas her daughters have to leave their natal home and spend their lives among people who will, to say the least, be critical of her in the first few years.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

243 788 On New Year's Day a clod of ploughed earth is brought home and deposited in the granary. When a man sees paddy in the ear for the first time, he goes home, stands before the granary, and says, 'I saw paddy in the ear, I saw paddy in the ear, do not be startled, do not be astonished, O granary.' He tells the granary that there is going to be a bumper harvest, a harvest that will burst the granary. At the Kāvēri festival, pilgrims carry home a handful of rice from the granary (called '*akshaya pātra*', the mythical vessel of increase) in the Bhaganḍēshwara temple. This rice is put into the domestic granary to ensure a bumper harvest.

Rice is essential to the Coorg's survival, and formerly it was also the chief source of wealth. Its cultivation is the most important activity in which the *okka*, the nuclear unit of Coorg society, is engaged, and the axis round which revolve other activities. A long drought as well as excess of rain is likely to ruin the crop. Rain is a friend only if it comes when wanted and keeps away when not wanted. Proper rains in sufficient quantities mean a good crop, and abundance of rice means food, wealth, and the ability to make sacrifices to ancestors and festivals in honour of deities. It gives one the means with which one can get one's sons and daughters married, to keep one's servants, to give the feasts which have to be given, and to perform other obligations. It is because of its enormous social importance that rice, and everything associated with it in any way, receives ritual attention.

II

538 186 In Coorg folklore, Malabar is referred to as the 'land of ignorance' (*ajnāna bhūmi*), and this is presumably due to certain matrilineal castes living there. All the patrilineal peoples of south India seem to have regarded matriliny as a very odd custom. The people of the Kannaḍa and Tamil countries occasionally refer to Malabar as '*stri malayāḷa*', which means 'Malabar which is dominated by [723] women'. There are myths which try to account for the oddness of Malabar: according to a myth which is widespread over the whole of south India, the entire Malabar coast was created by Parashurāma, the great Brahmin enemy of Kshatriyas till he was finally defeated by the Kshatriya prince, Rāma, the hero of Rāmāyaṇa, and an *avatār* of Vishṇu. The folktale on p. 221, which gives an account of a solitary act of disobedience on the part of Laksh-

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

maṇa towards his eldest brother Rāma, testifies to the utter strangeness of Malabar. It is so strange that people setting foot in it behave in an unpredictable way. This is doubly proved by Lakshmaṇa's great act of contrition immediately on returning to Coorg.

In the folksongs, deities are frequently reported as having migrated from Malabar or South Canara into Coorg. It is true that the deities are created 'beyond the Seven Seas, on the shore of the Milk Sea', but they subsequently migrate to a town on the west coast, whence they proceed inland, towards Coorg, to seek shelter. In the story of the two deities, Achchaiah (m.) and Akkavva (f.), brother and sister, at first wander all over Malabar seeking shelter. They are directed to Coorg by some deities whom they went to in their search for shelter, and as soon as they cross into Coorg, Akkavva tells Achchaiah, 'O elder brother, when people see us wandering about together they will think that we are husband and wife, and not brother and sister. Let us take an escort with us'. Achchaiah accepts his sister's advice and takes a Poleya servant. This incident raises the question, 'why did not Akkavva think of taking an escort before crossing over into Coorg'? It assumes that a person need not be particular about what he does in Malabar.

Educated Coorgs assert that Achchayya is a popular name for Vishṇu, and Akkavva for Lakshmi. This makes out Achchaiah and Akkavva to be husband and wife, and not brother and sister—the precaution taken by Akkavva in the story was in vain! It is only one instance of Sanskritization producing an inconsistency. According to the general rule mentioned in the '*dēsha keṭṭ pāṭ*', there is a 'Mādēva (Mahādēva or Shiva) for every *nāḍ* and Povvedi (Bhagavati) for every village'. This rule is interpreted in such a way by Coorgs that every male village-deity who is not said to be a form of Vishṇu is said to be a form of Mādēva, and every female village-deity who is not said to be a form of Lakshmi is said to be a form of Bhagavati, wife of Mādēva. After giving the popular name of a village-deity, Coorgs frequently take care to add that 'he is *really* Vishṇu (or Shiva)'.

The story of the seven deities is relevant here. Seven deities, six brothers and a sister, wandered all over Malabar in search of shelter. The first three deities, Kānyarāṭappa, Tirchembarappa, and Bendrukōlappa, found shelter in Malabar villages alone, while the remaining four went to Coorg in search of shelter. They crossed

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

a festival in your honour every year on the first of Aries. They will perform a dance, and offer you fowls. You possess them, and grant children to the childless.' The sister was inconsolable, and said that she could not bear the smell of Poleyas. But the eldest brother was adamant, and the reluctant sister closed both her eyes and assuming the form of a crane flew away to Pannangāla. In the latter village she possessed the Poleya servant of the Kartaṇḍa *okka* who tried to catch the crane. This deity is now known as Pannangālatammé (*ammé* means 'mother').

The eldest of the three brothers settled down on a mountain near the Pāḍitora Pass, and he is known as Iggutappa. It is said that on the first of Aries, when the festival of Pannangālatammé is being observed, Iggutappa's hill is covered with clouds, and it rains a little on the hill. Iggutappa, it is said, is very sorry for his poor sister who was forced to become a deity of the Poleyas, and he sheds tears for her fate. (Iggutappa is identified by educated Coorgs with Subramaṇya.)

The elder of the two remaining brothers settled down in Pālūr and is known as Pālūrappa. He is identified with Vishṇu. The last of the brothers settled down in the southern frontier of Coorg in Tirnelli and he is known as Tirnelli Pemmayya. He guards the frontier from Māri, the goddess presiding over epidemic diseases, and from thieves. He, too, is identified with Vishṇu.

Certain features of this myth may be noted. (1) The deities setting out from Malabar are related as brothers and sister. (2) They have a sense of seniority, common to both Malabar and Coorg. (3) As soon as the brothers and sister cross over into Coorg, conflict arises between them. The sister proves supreme, but the brothers manage to defeat her in the end by adopting unfair means. (4) The sister's defeat expresses itself in the caste idiom—a familiar idiom in Coorg folklore. (5) The transition from matrilineal Malabar to patrilineal Coorg results in the overthrow of the sister by the brothers. The brothers adopt unfair means to overthrow the sister, but having overthrown her, are not happy about her degradation. Iggutappa's mountain is covered with clouds which dissolve into rain on the first of Aries: the tears he sheds are not crocodile's tears, as the situation is essentially ambivalent. (6) Finally, the brothers all undergo Sanskritization. The eldest of them is identified with Subramaṇya, while the two younger brothers

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

are identified with Vishṇu. This is no doubt inconsistent, but Sanskritization frequently produces inconsistencies.

Pannangālatammé is only one of several instances of deities losing their caste. Kētrappa (m.) and Povvedi (f.) of Bēngūr lost their caste too. The case of Povvedi of Bēngūr is interesting as her namesake in Balmāvṭi, a village three miles away, retains her caste, has a Brahmin priest, and accepts only offerings of fruit and flowers. The ubiquity of the caste idiom deserves notice: the deities of the lowest castes like Poleyas and Mēdas are not worshipped by the higher castes, and these deities bear the same relation to the deities of the higher castes which the lower castes themselves bear to the higher. The habits of some deities are occasionally explained by reference to the caste idiom. A deity who accepts animal-sacrifice and liquor has lost his original high caste; and sometimes such an explanation enables a Sanskritic deity to become the deity of castes which consume meat and liquor.

III

Marriage is a preferred condition among Coorgs, and a married man has a higher ritual and social status than a bachelor. A bachelor's social personality is not regarded as fully developed.

In the case of women, however, the contrast is not so much between spinsters and married women as between the latter and widows. A widow wears only white clothes, and these clothes may not have a coloured border. The clothes and ornaments worn by a married woman may not be worn by a widow. Certain ornaments which are associated with a married woman, like black glass bangles, necklace of black glass beads, and rolls of palm leaves worn as ear-ornaments, have become symbols of the married state. As such they receive ritual respect.

It is usual for young Coorg widows to remarry, and a remarried widow has a higher social and ritual status than a widow who does not remarry, though she does not have the same status as a woman whose first and only husband is alive.

Coorgs do not differentiate between a married woman and widow as thoroughly as, for instance, the Brahmins. Amongst the latter marriage and patriliny are bound up with certain theological ideas: a woman's husband is her god, and a son not only continues the lineage but releases his ancestors from a particular kind of hell

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

he had put away at the beginning of the rainy season. The break in the continuity of the relationship between a man and, say, his gun, creates some 'awkwardness' and so the weapons are worshipped before being used. Later, a collective hunt is held.

The Kaṇiya astrologer decides what periods of time are auspicious for worshipping the weapons and for cutting branches of the *poyyakaṇé* tree. He also decides when the village or *nāḍ* should have the collective hunt, in which direction the hunting party should go if they want the hunt to be successful, and, finally, the man who should lead the hunt.

The branches of the *poyyakaṇé* tree are used for making barriers which are erected in the rice-fields a few weeks after the end of transplantation, in order to catch the small fish which abound in the waterlogged fields during this part of the year. These fish are regarded as a great delicacy, and catching them is a favourite sport. An improvident man is described in a proverb as one who lives on fish caught in the fields and on rice borrowed from neighbours at a ruinous rate of interest.

The weapons are cleaned and kept either in the sacred central hall or in the south-western room. They are marked with sandalwood paste. (Some Coorgs, like Brahmins on the western coast, mark their foreheads with sandalwood paste before worshipping a deity.) The weapons are worshipped with flowers, and a favourite flower used for worship on this occasion is the *tōku* which derives its name from the fact that it looks like a gun. Curried meat and cooked rice-flour are offered on plantain leaves to the weapons.

After dinner, the men put on their gowns, and assemble in the south-western room, or central hall. The head of the *okka* hands over to each his weapons and the latter salutes the former after receiving his weapons.[1] The headman says, as he stands over the weapons, 'Fight a tiger and boar by stepping aside the charging beast [i.e. avoid standing in the direct line of the charge], do not underrate your enemy, fight him face to face, stand by your friend, be obedient to the king, and do not forget God.'

The headman of the *okka* feeds the domestic dogs with cooked rice-flour. Then, just before the men of the *okka* leave the house for the village green he says, 'Let the horned deer and tusked boar cross my path.' Finally, he fires a shot in the direction of the jungle.

[1] A boy who is old enough to hunt receives his first gun on this occasion.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

[p. 241]

APPENDIX

THE KĀVĒRI MYTH

I

THE myth woven round the River Kāvēri forms part of the Skānda Purāṇa.[1] In 1864 the Kāvēri Myth, called *Kāvēri Māhātmya* or 'the greatness of Kāvēri', was translated into Kannaḍa from the original Sanskrit by one Śrīnivāsa Iyengār at the instance of an influential Coorg official, Nanjappa, of the Biddanḍa *okka*. The Myth has also been translated into Koḍagi, presumably from the Kannaḍa translation of the Sanskrit original.

538 ●

The *Kāvēri Māhātmya* as it is found in the *Skānda Purāṇa* is an extremely complicated story, containing many stories within it after the manner of *purāṇic* tales. It is inconsistent in many places, but then a *purāṇa* is intended for the faithful laity who have no disbelief to suspend. Richter, exasperated by the inconsistencies of the *Kāvēri Māhātmya*, has written,

538
177

> 'the extraordinary anachronism of Pārvati's blessing given to Chandravarma, the founder of the Coorg people, who is thereby rendered victorious over the Mlēchchas or Turks [Muslim invaders of India], who made their first appearance about 500 years ago, transgresses even the thoughtless audacity of a *purāṇa*; for the *purāṇa* belongs according to its own account to the age of the Rishis (or the sages) who were long extinct when the Turks appeared. The numerous passages, inculcating the duty of the valiant Coorgs, to offer to the Brahmins the honours and gifts due to them, have met with singularly bad success. The Coorgs, it would appear, never troubled themselves much about the contents and admonitions of the Kāvēri book, and though the translation of it was designed to make it accessible to them, it is so highly spiced with Sanskrit and Old Kannaḍa expressions, that few do understand it.'[2]

[1] ' "The *Skānda Purāṇa* is that in which the six-faced deity (Skanda) has related the events of the Tatpurusha Kalpa, enlarged with many tales. . . . It is said to contain 81,800 stanzas . . . ." "It is uniformly agreed," says Wilson, "that the *Skānda Purāṇa*, in a collective form, has no existence; and the fragments, in the shape of Sanhitas, Khanḍas, and Māhātmyas, which are affirmed in various parts of India to be portions of the *Purāṇa*, present a much more formidable mass of stanzas than even the immense number of which it is said to consist." ' J. Dowson, *Hindu Classical Dictionary*, pp. 300–1.

[2] Op. cit., pp. 216–17.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

538 177 Richter's understandable irritations and prejudices prevented him from comprehending the true function of the *purāṇa*, which is to account for certain inconsistencies in the culture of Coorgs, and to 'place' them in the caste system. Also the weaving of a *purāṇa* round a local river or mountain represents only an initial step in the Sanskritization of the beliefs, customs, and rites of a people. It prepares the way for subsequent complete Sanskritization. Certain theological and moral ideas come initially with the *purāṇas*.

Richter is right in saying that few Coorgs could have understood a *purāṇa* written in a mixture of Sanskrit and literary Kannaḍa. He could not have foreseen that it would become a folksong several decades later.

538 778 The *Kāvēri Māhātmya* describes the story of the divine origin of the river, enumerates the sacred bathing places along its course from source to estuary, and some of the temples on its banks. It deals with Coorg, the country in which the river has its origin, and Coorgs, who are its most distinctive, numerous, and important inhabitants. It gives the story of the origin of Coorgs.

539 Long ago, Kavēra Muni, a sage, retired to Brahmagiri (the present source of the River Kāvēri) mountain in order to meditate on Brahma, the Creator. Kavēra's devotion was so great that in the end four-headed Brahma appeared before him and asked him what he wanted. Kavēra told Brahma that he wanted children. Brahma replied that Kavēra could not have any children of his own because of sins committed in a previous life, but as Kavēra had shown exceptional devotion, Brahma presented him with Lopāmudré, Brahma's adopted daughter, and a manifestation of Pārvati. The sage was pleased with the boon. Lopāmudré informed Kavēra that she regarded herself as his daughter, and that she wanted to become a holy river, a bathe in which would rid people of their sins.

The girl lived with her foster-parents, Kavēra and his wife, till they both died. Some time after their death she met a great sage Agastya,[1] who had gone to the Brahmagiri mountain in order to meditate on Shiva. Agastya fell in love with Kāvēri, as the foster-daughter of Kavēra was called, and asked her to marry him. She agreed on condition that she would leave him for good if she was ever left alone even for a little while.

One morning Agastya wanted to bathe in Kanaké, a river which rises in the Brahmagiri mountain, a mile from the source of the Kāvēri. He put his wife into a vessel and handed the vessel to his young Brahmin disciples for safe keeping during his absence. Kāvēri, annoyed at being

[1] Agastya is a famous rishi, the son of the Vēdic gods Mitra and Varuṇa by Urvashi. He is said to have been born in a water-jar, and was very short of stature. He once drank up the oceans, and compelled the Vindhya mountains to prostrate themselves before him. Tradition accords him a great place in Tamil literature, and also credits him with the introduction of Sanskritic Hinduism and Sanskrit literature into the South. He is also associated with mountains.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

left alone, made the boy carrying the vessel stumble and fall. The vessel rolled on the ground and Kāvēri escaped from it and flowed away as a river. The disciples then stopped the river which promptly went underground. (The Kāvēri flows underground from the source till Bhāgamaṇḍla, where the Kanaké joins it.)

Agastya returned from his bathe and learnt of what had happened in his absence. He ran after his wife who was swiftly flowing away as a river. He caught up with her and expressed his regret at having left her alone and begged her forgiveness. As a result of his entreaties, Kāvēri decided to split herself into two halves, one half flowing away as the River Kāvēri, and the other half becoming Lopāmudré, the wife of Agastya. Agastya then told the river-half the course it should take to the sea, and enumerated the centres of pilgrimage along the course.

II

Long ago a Brahmin sage named Suyajnya settled down on the Brahmagiri mountain and meditated upon Vishṇu with great devotion. His devotion was so great that Vishṇu appeared in person before him and asked him what he wanted. Suyajnya replied that he wanted children, and Vishṇu gave his own daughter Sujyoti to the sage. The deity asked the sage to take the girl to Kanaké, servant of Indra, living on top of the Agni Mountain, near the source of the Kāvēri. Suyajnya did as Vishṇu had instructed him, and took Sujyoti to Kanaké. The two girls decided to meditate together. They did so for several centuries, giving up food and water. At last Indra appeared before them, and he at once fell in love with Sujyoti. He married her.

Some time after marriage Sujyoti informed her friend Kanaké that she was dissatisfied with the life she was leading, and that she wanted to do good to mankind. She suggested to Kanaké that both of them should become rivers and join the Kāvēri. Kanaké fell in with Sujyoti's suggestion and the two flowed away as rivers. Indra became indignant when he saw that his wife had left him to become a river. He cursed her, 'You have become a river without my permission. May your waters dry up.' Sujyoti was so distraught with grief when she heard the curse that Indra felt sorry for her and modified his curse, 'You will flow without water till you join the Kāvēri at Bhāgamaṇḍla, and then in the company of Kāvēri and Kanaké join the sea.'

The Rivers Kāvēri and Kanaké meet at Bhagāmaṇḍla, and to these two which actually meet there the *Kāvēri Māhātmya* adds a third, Sujyoti, which is said to meet the two unseen. Apropos of this Richter writes, 'The story of the invisible river Sujyoti, joining the Kanaké and Kāvēri is a lame imitation of the northern tale, that Saraswati, a stream of great renown among the Brahmins, is not lost, as it seems, in the

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

538 177 desert sands, but joins the Jumna and Ganges at Prayāga (Allahabād).'[1] The *Kāvēri Māhātmya* is an attempt to produce a southern parallel to the northern model. Here again is an instance of the way in which the Sanskritic idiom extends over the whole of India.

III

539 Another, and a very important, part of the *Kāvēri Māhātmya* brings the river Kāvēri, the country of its origin, and the most distinctive inhabitants of the country, Coorgs, all into relation with each other. A special and intimate bond is created between the three.

Siddhārta, the King of Matsyadēsha, had four sons, the youngest and most gifted of whom was Chandravarma. Some time after he had come of age Chandravarma left his father and went on a pilgrimage to various holy places in south India. In the course of his pilgrimage he went to the Brahmagiri mountain where he meditated on Pārvati, the wife of Shiva. When the goddess presented herself before Chandravarma and asked him what he wanted, he replied that he wanted a kingdom, a wife of Kshatriya caste who would bear him children, and a place in heaven after death. Pārvati told him that owing to sins committed in a previous life, he could not have children from a wife belonging to his own caste, but would have to be content with children from a Shūdra wife. The goddess herself presented him with a Shūdra bride, and told him that his wife would bear him eleven sons, who would be called *ugras*. They would be courageous and righteous, and respectful to Brahmins. They would be equal to Kshatriyas in every respect except one, viz., they would not be entitled to the performance of Vēdic ritual. They would be devoted to the worship of Shiva and Pārvati.[2] The goddess assured Chandravarma that she would be born in course of time as the River Kāvēri, and confer prosperity and other blessings on the children (Coorgs) of Chandravarma. She asked him to go forth and clear the land of Mlēchchas (Muslims). She gave him a victorious sword, a white horse quick as the wind, and an army to drive the Mlēchchas out of the country.

Chandravarma overcame the Mlēchchas and married a woman of his own caste according to Vēdic rites. The coronation ceremony was performed by Brahmins to whom he gave houses and lands. He invited other castes to settle down in Coorg, called Matsyadēsha after the country ruled by his father. He had eleven sons from his Shūdra wife, and Vēdic rites were performed for each of them on occasions like the conferment of name, performance of tonsure, and investment with the sacred thread.

[1] Op. cit., p. 216.

[2] The *Skānda Purāṇa*, of which the *Kāvēri Māhātmya* is only a part, has a Shaivite orientation. The River Kāvēri is identified with Lopāmudrē, a manifestation of Pārvati.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

In this respect they were treated like Kshatriyas and other twice-born castes.

When they came of age, the eleven sons married the hundred daughters of the King of Vidharbadēsha, the eldest son Dēvakānta marrying twenty girls, the second son, sixteen, the third, twelve, and so on.

Chandravarma retired with his two wives to the Himālayas to meditate on Shiva and Pārvati. Before his departure he told his children that Pārvati would be reborn in Coorg as the River Kāvēri and that they would be happy as long as they continued to worship Shiva and Pārvati, and the Brahmins.

Each of the sons of Chandravarma had more than a hundred sons. They were all very strong men, with nails as sharp and powerful as the tusks of boars. With their nails they levelled the ground and tore up the forests, and generally reclaimed land.

> 'Then they settled themselves anew in the country, the face of which they had changed by the strength of their own arms. Around them they planted houses and families of Brahmins and other castes. Because this re-establishment of the country resembled the renowned deeds of the *varahāvatāra* (the boar-incarnation of Vishṇu),[1] the country of Chandravarma's sons was henceforth called Krōdadēsha, and its inhabitants 'Krōda people'. The word Krōda is said to have been changed and corrupted by degrees into Koḍagu, which is the present, and probably was the original name of the country.'[2]

Two days before the first of Libra, when the Kāvēri festival is celebrated annually, Pārvati appeared in a dream to Dēvakānta, the King of Coorgs, and ordered him to assemble his people in a place called Balmuri, where she would meet them. Accordingly, all Coorgs assembled there to greet Pārvati in the form of a river. The river came rushing down the valley, and the violence of the flood pushed the frontal knots of the women's *saris* to their backs, and even now Coorg women push the frontal knot to the back in memory of their first bathe in the Kāvēri. Pārvati appeared in person before the assembled Coorgs, and told them to ask a boon of her. Coorgs asked for children, wealth, a kingdom for themselves, and a priest, and Kāvēri granted them everything they asked for.

It is clear from the brief summary of the *Kāvēri Māhātmya* given above that it is Brahminical in origin. Brahmins are praised in it, conferred wealth and other privileges, and Coorg kings are told that they should 'establish holy Brahmins' in their land.

[1] A demon named Hiraṇyāksha dragged the earth to the bottom of the sea. Vishṇu assumed the form of a boar (*varāha*) and rescued the earth after slaying the demon at the end of a contest lasting a thousand years.

[2] Op. cit., p. 224. *Krōdha* means 'anger, wrath, and passion'.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

538 778 The *Kāvēri Māhātmya* brings the River Kāvēri and its worship into the main stream of the *purāṇas* which have an All-India spread. It also makes Sanskritic deities and ideas familiar to the inhabitants of Coorg. A special and intimate relation is established between Coorg, Coorgs, and the river as a result of it. A distinctive feature of the dress of Coorg women is associated with the Kāvēri. Coorgs regard the Kāvēri as their [551] patron goddess. At least one in ten girls is named Kāvēri.

773 The account of the origin of Coorgs in the *Kāvēri Māhātmya* is an attempt to reconcile certain facts which are not easy to reconcile. While it is true that Coorgs are a wealthy and powerful group with a martial outlook, they do not perform certain Vedic rituals which are performed by Kshatriyas elsewhere in India, and their dietary includes domestic pork and liquor. The myth finds a way out of the difficulties by suggesting that they are Ugras, the descendants of a Kshatriya father and Shūdra mother.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

one, who must hold this rope. A piece of wood, generally of a creeper called Odi, is cut into seven parts, which are called Chandu, i. e. balls. The man holding the rope puts six of these balls in a circle round the peg at a distance of the rope's length, the seventh is deposited close by the peg. The whole company now endeavours to pick off the balls without being touched by their guardian. The player in the centre, always keeping the rope's end in one hand, turns round and round, and tries to touch some one of the aggressors. If he succeed, the person touched must take his place and the play recommences. When six balls are abstracted, the seventh must be moved to the distance of one foot from the peg. When this also is lost, the man has to run through the whole crowd and escape, without being caught, to the Musicians' place. If he reach this asylum in safety, the play is won and finished. If he be caught on his way, he is brought before the Nettle-man, an officer of the play-court, who has been waiting all the time, a long Angare-stick—a large fierce nettle—in his hand, for the victim. His hands and feet are well touched and the play ends. Now the assembly perform different kinds of plays and dances, representing the wars which in ancient times appear to have been waged between people of different districts. A man is wounded; a physician is called, who prescribes for him. Another wounded man dies, and Holeyas are called to invite his friends to the funeral. A scene of demoniacal possession is acted. The funeral is performed. Now stories are told of incredibilities. "I saw the other day a little hare attacking a tiger and breaking its neck." Reply: "Did you? I saw a buffaloe flying over the mountains," etc. Three men invoke again Ayappa, Mahádéva and Bhagavati. Dances follow, accompanied by the beating of sticks keeping time with the music of the band outside. Feats of gymnastic strength and agility follow, and another invocation of the three deities concludes the performance.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

193 As in Canarese *adverbs* are in Kodagu formed of nouns by adding the affixes áyitū, áyi (Can. ági), e. g. chamáyi (Can. samavági) according to.

The most common adverbs of time and place are the following:—

yekkū	when,	ikkū	now,	akkū	then.
yendū	which day,	indū	this day,	andū	that day.
yelli	where,	illi	here,	alli	there.

By the usual affixes these adverbs undergo like nouns of the neuter gender a kind of declension, in which the instr. case indicates motion from and the dative motion to a place; e. g.

Instr.	yellinji	whence,	illinji	hence,	allinji	thence.
Dat.	yellikkū	whither,	illikkū	hither,	allikkū	thither.

Most of the adverbs, however, do not admit of declension.

To advert in a few lines to the Kodagu syntax, it may be remarked, that it is quite in harmony with that of the Dravida languages. A Kodagu or Canarese compound sentence, though it presents a complete reversion of our European structure of sentences, is to the accustomed ear as perfect and harmonious as a Greek period, which is perhaps equally involved by participial constructions. The principal verb (verbum finitum) invariably is placed last in the sentence and as a general rule every complement to the subject, object and predicate, whether expressed by a word, a phrase or a clause, precedes the word complemented.

538 533 *Literature.* Strictly speaking there is no literature in the Kodagu language, as a few indigenous songs of a very limited range of subjects comprise the whole catalogue. These songs are known in every Coorg house, and, commemorating as they do the chief events of social life, marriage, death, and festivities, and the warfare with the Mussulman power in Mysore, they are likely to continue to be popular.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

539

Riding forth the world to conquer,
The commander of her armies
Vanquished all her enemies;
Sitting on the throne of judgment
Executed right and justice.
As you shoot the ruddy amber,
So he slew his adversaries.
When the great and valiant hero
Had destroyed the royal tiger, *
All the flocks lived free and happy.
Fearless all the nations dwell
Near and far in the dominions
Of our gracious Queen and Ruler.
Long live our noble Queen
By the grace of God Almighty
To protect this happy Coorg-land!

The chanting of these songs is very simple and varies only within a range of 3 notes which are intoned with a slow tremulous and rather melancholy utterance, especially when accompanied by the rude native instruments, the monotony of which, however exciting to a crowd, is grievous to a musical ear. The Coorg instruments are: the *Pare* and *Kudike-pare*, a large and small wooden drum, the *Dudi*, a metal drum, the *Kombu* or brass horn and the *Tâla* or cymbal.

533 534

It may be expected, that the Coorgs, who are a shrewd and good-humoured people indulge also in racy proverbs, with which they spice their conversations during their idle hours, or when convened in solemn meetings in the Ambala of the village-green. The following are a few specimens:—

538 521

539

1. Paṭṭama paḍekâga, pireke karikâga
Beppeneke bechaka pireke karikâku
Poppaneke pottaka paṭṭama paḍekâku.

Brahmins are worthless for fighting, the pirike fruit (Colocynth) useless for curry, but if the pirike is properly dressed, it may be

* Tippu Sultan.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

III. PART.

The History of Coorg.

538
173
177

1. THE LEGENDARY PERIOD OF THE KĀVÉRI-PURĀṆA.

The ancient annals of Coorg history are the Kávéri-Puráṇa which forms an episode in 4 chapters (11—14) of the Skanda- or Kártikéya-Puráṇa; but in a brahminical legend we must not look for the simple record of a popular tradition. The Brahmins, the creative minds of the old Indian literature, had it in their power to mould any original tradition into whatever shape they pleased for the furtherance of their own interests.

It has ever been their policy, as gods terrestrial, to lay claim to the whole Indian world, their great champion Parshuráma having presented to their Patriarch Káshiyappa as a gift the conquered earth, the Jambudwípa, after the defeat of the Kshetrias and the destruction of their 18 tribes. The primitive gods of the nations of Jambudwípa or India were either turned into Avatáras of Vishnu or incorporated as Demons with the host of Siva, the high mountains were peopled with celebrated Rishis or hermits, and the mightiest and most fertilizing rivers brought into relationship with the principal brahminical deities. Ganga and Kávéri fell to the lot of Siva; Krishna and Gódáveri were sacred to Vishnu.

The Kávéri-Puráṇa or Kávéri-Mahátmya (glorification of Kávéri) describes the sacred river from its source to its union

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

538
173
177

with the sea and enumerates the holy bathing places and the temples on its banks. The Purána had naturally to treat also of Coorg, where the Kávéri rises, and accomplished the task as it would best suit brahminical interests. This was no easy matter. We have seen, how ill the tough materials of the wild world of Coorg suited brahminical taste; how these illiterate and untamable hunters seem to have ever had an instinctive antipathy to, and thorough contempt for, the sanctities and pretensions of the smooth and crafty Brahmins and that these were not slow in returning the compliment has been described in former pages.

The author of the Kávéri-Mahátmya, of which a Canarese translation has been made in 1864 by Srínivásayengar at the desire and expense of the late Head Sheristadar, Biddianda Nanchappa, does not appear to have been very skilful; for anticipating no serious criticism he allowed his fancy to run away with his better judgment.

The story of the invisible river Sujyóti, joining the Kánake and Kávéri is a lame imitation of the northern tale, that Sarasvati, a stream of great renown among the Brahmins, is not lost, as it seems, in the desert sands, but joins the Ganges and the Jumna (Yamuna), unseen, at Prayága. The holy Sarasvati must have an end worthy of its sanctity. But here in the Kávéri-Purána the third, altogether invisible, stream Sujyóti is an idle fable introduced only to complete a southern trinity of holy rivers. The extraordinary anachronism of Párvati's blessing given to Chandravarma, the founder of the Coorg people, who is thereby rendered victorious over the Mlechas or Turks, who made their first appearance about 500 years ago, transgresses even the thoughtless audacity of a Purána; for the Purána belongs according to its own account to the age of the Rishis, who were long extinct, when the Turks appeared. The numerous passages, inculcating the duty of the valiant Coorgs, to offer to the Brahmins the honors

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

and gifts due to them, have met with singularly bad success. The Coorgs, it would appear, never troubled themselves much about the contents and the admonitions of the Kávéri book, and, though the translation of it was designed to make it accessible to them, it is so highly spiced with Sanscrit and old Canarese expressions, that few do understand it.

The Kávéri-Puráṇa seeks to glorify the holy river. Its divine origin, its connection with the Rishi Agastya, (the settler of the Vindhya-mountain-range, the great son of both Mitra and Varuna), and its course through the eastern country into the sea in obedience to the counsel of Agastya, all conspire to give it a character of surpassing sanctity.

The seizure of the Amrita, the produce of the ocean-churning by the Asuras, spread consternation and despair among the hosts of the gods. They invoked the great Vishnu, the lord of all. He had compassion on them. From him Móhini emanated,—Lakshmi at the same time sending forth Lópámudre (a form of Párvati),—charmed the Asuras by her transcendent beauty, and restored the drink of immortality to the gods. After having delivered the gods, she retired to Brahmagiri—where the sources of the Kávéri now are—and was changed into a rocky cave. Lópámudre was given to Brahma, who brought her up as his daughter. Thus ends the first act, the scene (true Puráṇa fashion) being laid in the heavens. The second act passes to the earth. Kavéra Muni retires to Brahmagiri, there to give himself wholly to meditation on Brahma. He asks Brahma for children. Brahma—how could he refuse the prayer of his devout Rishi?—gives him Lópámudre for a daughter. She, in order to procure beatitude for her new father, resolves on becoming a river, pouring out blessings on the earth, and all the merits arising from this course of devoted goodness, are to be appropriated to Kavéra Muni. For this purpose she resorts to one of the heights of Brahmagiri and invokes Brahma, to give her the